

Report to Presbytery January 2024

Jan Howe
Stated Supply Pastor

When we were first told about the grant from Presbytery we were at a loss as to how we could use those funds in Antrim. Of course, we could financially use the funds, but we struggled with what mission or activity that we could pursue using this grant that we were not already doing in the community.

We are well connected with the local Antrim Community.

- Our Revival Shop (clothing store as presented at Presbytery last Fall) works collaboratively with major stake holders in the community.
- We meet monthly with the Grapevine Family Services which organizes a forum for all organizations, groups, school, library, and businesses to meet and share ideas and concerns about the community.
- Our building is used by various groups; The Antrim Bennington Lion's Club, The Grange, A local woman's gathering, Al-Anon, Historical Society events/presentations, Monthly Community Supper, a Community Choir, and A Teen Center Cooking Club.
- Our Front lawn is used for many community events and many in the community call the church a Community Center.

We, The Antrim session and I, spent many session meetings praying and talking about this grant. The Rev. Allen Timm was persistent and kept reminding us of the grant and nudging us to apply. Almost at the last hour we, like Samuel, finally heard God's voice calling and leading us! As all of a sudden an idea came to us, and we developed a plan.

These are not new missions, but this grant allows me the time to work more closely with two community wide events that needed revitalization after COVID. Both community wide services needed energy and time to get them back to what they once were and hopefully even more vibrant than pre-COVID.

Both activities revolve around people gathering and sharing a meal together. One involves the elderly which is designated as 60 and over working with Hillsborough County Meals on Wheels and the other one is an intergenerational community meal.

Since we received the grant just two months ago, we have already seen some results that we were not expecting.

First, --Senior meals have increased in numbers! The first month there were 20 and it now averages 30 with a potential to 65 if everyone attends the same month.

Second, --Community Suppers- My attendance has allowed me to meet more community folk. For example, at the most recent one, I met a retired Episcopalian Priest who recently moved to Antrim. This will be a benefit to the church as she is willing to do supply preaching.

Third, -- The Revival Shop is open just after the community supper which has increased funds raised as well as enabling more people to have access to the store. And

Fourth, -- may not be a direct result of the grant but I believe that having put time into the community in a new way led to the success of the event. One of the groups, using the church weekly this past year, call themselves the Antrim Songsters and they decided to host a fundraiser Holiday concert for the church and had me be the Emcee. They requested donations, to be used for the church building in appreciation of the wider community using our facilities. Not only did that evening raise we have seen new donations arrive in the mail.

The community came out and the sanctuary was full!

We in Antrim are appreciative of this grant and what it is enabling us to do in our community. We encourage other small churches to pray about their settings so that maybe the Holy Spirit will inspire you to be challenged by the grant to engage more fully in your community!